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ABSTRACT

A summary of UNESCO action in Africa over the past decade is presented. Efforts to aid African nations develop in the fields of education, science and technology, social sciences, culture, and communication and information are described. Appendices list the permanent African delegations to UNESCO; UNESCO established offices in Africa also are described. (DB)

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Unesco and Africa

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Introduction

For most African States, joining Unesco coincided with the attainment of independence: the Organization is proud to have helped, from the start of its co-operation with them and within its spheres of competence, to consolidate this independence and to provide the peoples and governments of Africa with the means to build their own future.

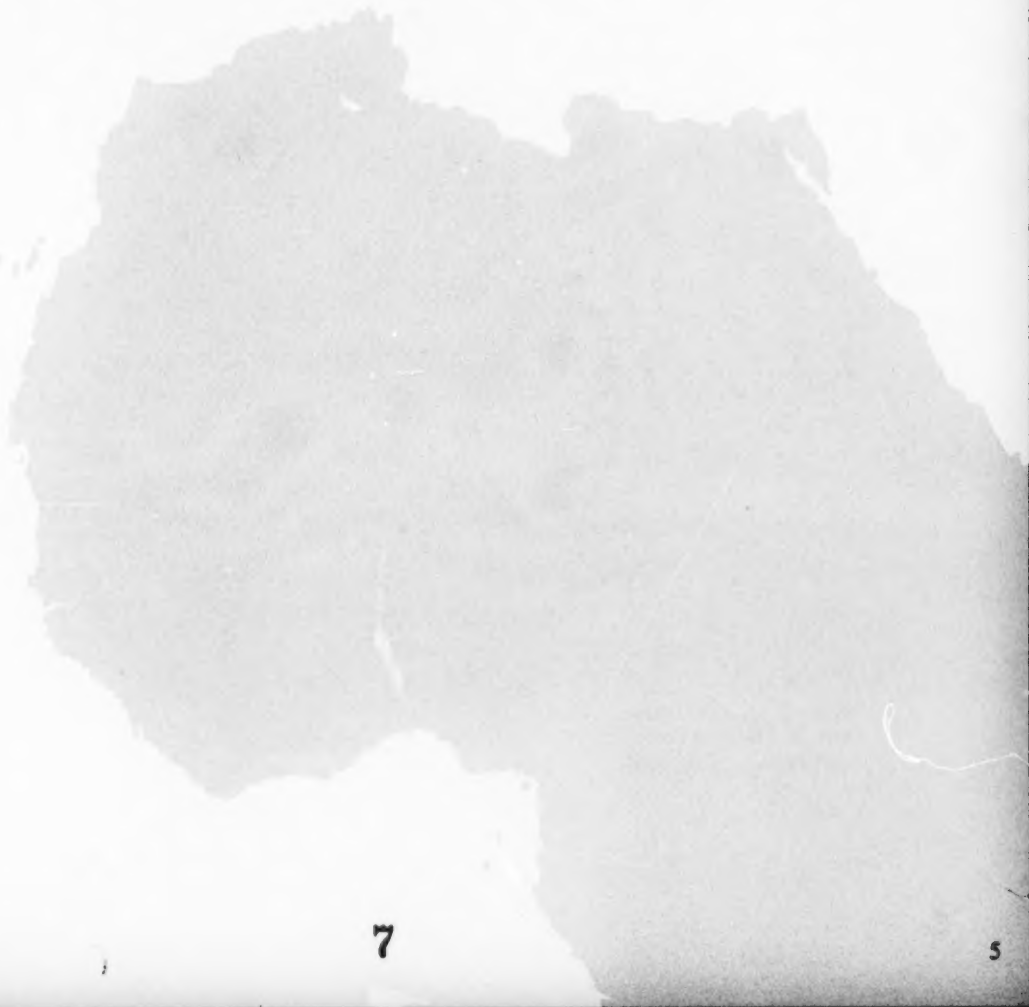
Entrusted by the community of nations with a central role in the fields of education, science, culture and communication, Unesco was the first to stress the fundamental importance of the cultural dimension of development and has always served as an essential partner in any policy of progress that seeks to look beyond the purely economic aspects of development and assign to human beings their rightful place in this process so that they become not merely an object or instrument but also the ultimate goal of development. Unesco's action in the past has always been wholly directed towards this end. The pages that follow will enable the reader to assess just what has been done over the past decade. However, although this action has been considerable, it is not yet commensurate with needs, the urgency and scale of which I have had occasion to witness for myself. I have accordingly taken the view that our efforts on behalf of the African Member States should be significantly stepped up during the coming six years and I have prepared to this end a document whose title—*Priority: Africa*—is sufficient indication of the intention it embodies.

The programme it sets out is a response to the needs arising out of the urgent problems confronting these States, corresponds to their development objectives and will be implemented in close co-operation with the other organizations, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system. Forming part of the overall action of this system, it represents our contribution to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD), the implementation of which is being co-ordinated by the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Pérez de Cuellar.

The action of the United Nations system on behalf of Africa is, first and foremost, an enterprise of solidarity and co-operation: co-operation between

governments and organizations, naturally, but also between African countries themselves and between African countries and other regions of the world. By contributing to the development of Africa, the industrialized countries will not only have honoured the moral contract of solidarity merited by this great continent but will also have helped to advance their own conception of a more equitable and freer world.

Federico Mayor
Director-General



Direction and modalities of action

Only one African State—Egypt—participated in the creation of Unesco, which in 1958 still had only eight Member States from this region.[1] The African States joined the Organization in large numbers when they attained independence, mostly between 1960 and 1961, and now number 49 (out of 158).

Unesco's action was originally two-pronged. On the one hand, it was involved with emergency aid, whose most striking example is probably Unesco's participation in the United Nations emergency operation in the huge country now known as Zaire, involving the dispatch of hundreds of teachers, the reopening of existing primary and secondary schools and the creation of higher-education institutions which were sorely lacking. On the other, it developed a medium-term policy, initially for education, whose inception was marked by the adoption of the first Plan for African Educational Development by the Addis Ababa Conference in 1961.

This was the first of a series of regional conferences at ministerial level that were to define the scope of both the Member States' action and Unesco's involvement. Since then, Unesco has convened four other conferences on education, one on the conservation and use of natural resources, two on science and technology for development (CASTAFRICA I and II) and two devoted to culture and communication respectively (AFRICACULT and AFRICOM).

The recommendations of these regional conferences constitute one of the bases for the preparation of Unesco's programme; their application, with regard to the Organization's action, is financed either under its own budget for programme activities (research, collaboration, seminars, establishment of pilot institutions), or by funds made available to the Organization by other institutions (the World Bank, regional development banks, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), other international or regional sources) or by certain governments. These 'extra-budgetary' resources are devoted entirely to direct development assistance, in particular to the establishment of the infrastructures and institutions required for progress in education, science and culture, and to the development of modern information structures, adapted to the conditions prevailing in the region.

1. Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.

Education

Recapitulation of Unesco's action

Priorities and objectives

The African States themselves defined the guiding principles and basic lines of their educational policies at the regional conferences of ministers convened by Unesco. Within these policies the advance of society and development are intimately bound to the democratization of education and personal fulfilment to which the right to education entitles the individual. With regard to the content of education, the 'Outline of a Plan for African Educational Development', adopted in Addis Ababa in 1961, was supplemented at subsequent conferences by recommendations concerning science and technology teaching, technician training, the integration of the school in community life, links between school and the world of employment and the role of the school in strengthening African cultural identity. The Harare Conference (1982) which, for the first time, brought together not only ministers of education but also ministers and high-level officials responsible for economic planning, underscored in addition the importance of the link between development policy and educational strategy. It reaffirmed the pivotal role assigned to 'the democratization and renovation of education in order to enable all African children and adults of both sexes to exercise fully their right to education, a prerequisite for the fulfilment of individual potential and for the progress of society'.

Population dynamics, combined with the sharply rising demand for education and the economic crisis which restricted the possibilities of resorting to outside financing, led to an emphasis on improving the quality of education, on the reform of systems and content in the light of medium- and long-term socio-economic objectives and on the improvement of education system management, while limited means made the rigorous planning of policies and the rationalization of management systems and resources all the more necessary. Hence the importance of the Network of Educational Innovation for Development in Africa (NEIDA), established in 1978, and of the Project on Regional Technical Co-operation for Training and Research in Educational Planning and Administration (COFORPA), launched in 1981. In the future,

Towards universal primary education
(Photo : Unesco/P. Almasy)

these should become components of a project for human resources development that could receive financial support from UNDP.

Literacy work, primary education and adult education

Scope of the problem

The average illiteracy rate of 54 per cent (the highest in the world) conceals significant regional and social disparities: in the African countries appearing on the list of 'least developed countries' the rate may range from 42 to over 88 per cent. Depending on the region, it is 18 to 30 per cent higher for women than for men. Furthermore, as a result of population growth, the total number of illiterates rose from 139 million in 1970 to 162 million in 1985.

Although enrolment in primary education rose by 355 per cent between 1960 and 1982 (compared with 208 per cent for the developing countries as a whole), the average annual growth rate, which was 7.2 per cent between 1960 and 1980, fell to 2.4 per cent between 1980 and 1985. In 1985, 31 million children between the age of 6 and 11 and 37 million young people aged from 12 to 17 were outside any education system whatsoever. At the same time, inequalities remained, to the detriment of rural populations, girls and other disadvantaged groups such as nomads and marginal populations of major cities.

Unesco's action

Six African countries participated in the Experimental World Literacy Programme conducted by Unesco from 1968 to 1975 with UNDP financial assistance.

At present, 39 countries are taking part in the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa, adopted in 1983 by the General Conference of Unesco at its twenty-second session. Implemented by Unesco's Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA), the programme, based on a combined approach to literacy and post-literacy work and primary education, should among other things contribute to reducing the number of school failures

Ensuring a massive reduction of illiteracy
(Photo : Unesco/ Y. E. Nakpata)

stemming from socio-cultural and socio-economic factors in the family environment.

Unesco provides support for the design and implementation of national programmes to combat illiteracy and endeavours to stimulate direct co-operation between countries with common problems and interests. As a priority its assistance is directed to personnel training, the production and dissemination of educational material, research and teaching activities, the systematic exchange of information and, lastly, raising awareness and mobilizing the general public.

Literacy action also includes a number of activities (studies, seminars, workshops, pilot projects, advisory services) which aim to improve the access of women and girls to education, and enable adults to participate more effectively in the economic, social and cultural life of their communities and (in the Sahelian region) to combat desertification more effectively.

Science and technology education

Launched in 1984, the Advisory Committee on the Renewal of Science and Technology Teaching in Africa and the International Network for Information in Science and Technology, to which twenty-six African States belong, have tackled, under the auspices of Unesco, the major problems encountered in Africa by science-and-technology education at the secondary level: (a) shortage of qualified teachers, workshops, laboratories and educational material; (b) unsuitable curricula, inadequate content and teaching methods; and (c) lack of a linkage with practical applications in industry or agriculture, or with the research activities of higher-education institutions.

Four pilot projects are under way, devoted respectively to science-and-technology education in rural areas, science-and-technology education linked to productive work, the preparation of curricula for the in-service training of science teachers through the use of the media, and science and technology in adult education for women. Their objective is to develop educational materials—school textbooks, teachers' guides, low-cost scientific equipment—and test them, particularly at subregional workshops, as well as to promote the exchange of information and experience. An effort is being made to solve problems in a scientific way.

Unesco has also provided support for conferences (for instance the third Conference on Chemistry in Africa, Lomé, 1987), regional or national training workshops for staff and teachers, and working groups responsible for developing educational materials.

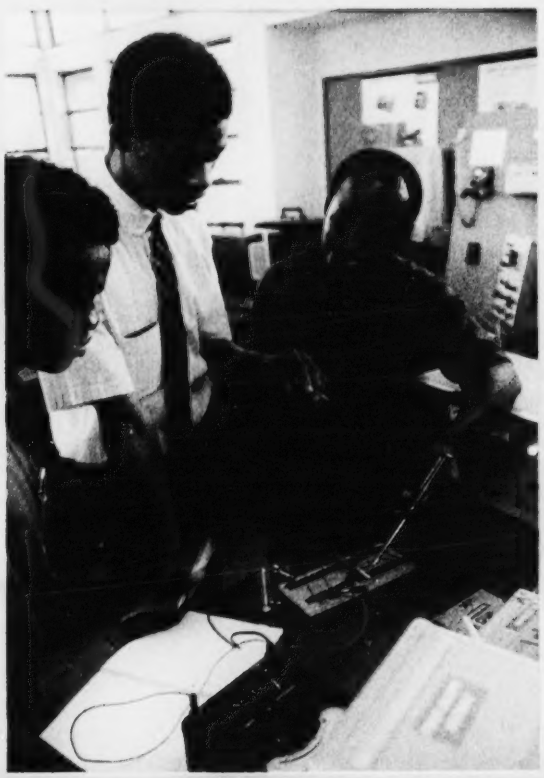
The Federal Science Equipment Manufacturing Centre was set up in Nigeria and another will be established in the United Republic of Tanzania. These will combine the development, production and maintenance of school science equipment with the in-service training of science teachers. Other States have received assistance for the local manufacture of equipment, and workshops have contributed to the dissemination of methods for the development of low-cost equipment for science-and-technology education. A number of African authors contributed to the publication *Studies in Mathematics Education.*

Technical and vocational education

Although the annual growth-rate for technical and vocational education was 7.5 per cent from 1970 to 1980, it is still lower than that of secondary education in general, which is 12.2 per cent.

Unesco has produced technical documents and guides to assist in the planning, administration and evaluation of technical and vocational education, developed a 'model curriculum', organized training sessions for national specialists, including three seminars on training and the use of modules in vocational, technical and agricultural education, and has provided scholarships and equipment. In addition, two pilot projects on the adaptation of technical and vocational teaching to rural areas have been carried out in Cameroon and Sierra Leone, and Nigeria has participated in a project for the development of a model training programme for computer technicians.

Continuing education beyond the initial phase of training
(Photo : Unesco/ Y. E. Nakpata)



Promoting technical education
(Photo : Unesco/Peter Larsen)

The education system is only as good as its staff
(Photo : Unesco/Jean Mohr)

Higher education

Established very recently (1987), a Regional Advisory Committee on Higher Education in Africa will advise Unesco in this field, a Network of Higher Education Institutions in Africa is being set up, and a Special Programme for the Improvement of Higher Education in Africa is in the process of being launched, in which Member States and university associations in Africa will participate.

The Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the African States, adopted in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, in 1981, and ratified by twelve Member States, will facilitate contacts and the exchange of graduates between participating states.

Science and technology

In the area of science and technology, the tasks that Unesco set itself as priorities in Africa were the systematic expansion of the research capabilities of the African Member States and the application of science and technology to the solution of a number of development problems. In this respect, the Organization concentrated notably on the study, conservation and rational use of the continent's natural resources.

The establishment or strengthening of bodies to guide national science-and-technology policy made it possible to programme activities and incorporate them into national development plans. Scholarship programmes and new training and research institutions contributed to strengthening and organizing national scientific communities, while regional mechanisms for liaison, documentation, information and scientific and technological co-operation were set up, also with Unesco's encouragement.

Infrastructure development

Unesco assisted the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in the establishment and development of a number of regional institutions. In some cases, they constituted the concluding stage of previous research-and-training activities, often conducted by the Organization in co-operation with regional or subregional intergovernmental organizations; areas covered range from sources of energy to scientific instrumentation or industrial property.

Special reference should be made to the African Regional Centre for Technology (Dakar), the African Regional Organization for Standardization (Nairobi) and the African Institute for Higher Technical Training and Research (Nairobi). Networks, institutions and scientific and technological research centres, financed partly under Unesco's regular budget and often set up in collaboration with other organizations, provide support to Unesco's action in areas such as marine sciences, informatics, biosciences and microbiology. A Standing Conference of Directors of Science and Technology Policy-making Bodies is in the process of being established.

Training and research

Basic and engineering sciences

Training and research are usually linked together, both in the university-level institutions to which Unesco provides support, in the seminars, workshops and courses it organizes, and in the pilot projects it implements many of which concern informatics. Similarly, many scholarships combine training with research. A special effort, including scholarship awards and support (with UNDP financing) to the Institut Africain d'Informatique in Gabon, has been devoted to the development of informatics in Africa. Other disciplines covered include: equipment design, chemistry of the environment, and cell and molecular biology (in collaboration with the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO) and the International Cell Research Organization (ICRO).

In the engineering sciences, the main effort focused on the training of specialists able to contribute to the application of endogenous technologies within the context of rural development, such as low-cost building or the rational use of energy; the same areas, together with the maintenance of scientific equipment, were given special attention in technician training (through seminars or workshops).

Unesco is encouraging engineering schools in Africa to promote the development of technologies applicable in rural areas and to co-operate closely with bodies working in the area of appropriate technology.

Many national or regional training institutions have been set up or supported by Unesco, which contributed to the establishment of the African Network of Scientific and Technological Institutions (ANSTI). More than forty engineering departments from twenty-five countries in the region are members. In addition to the development of research and curricula, the network organizes higher-level courses in mechanics, hydraulics and industrial research and design. It furthers joint research, the exchange of staff and students, the publication of technical works, the production of teaching materials and the exchange of information.

Africa faced with the introduction of informatics in every field
(Photo : Unesco/Inez Forbes)

In all, twenty-nine projects, costing a total of $33,713,000 were implemented in this field between 1978 and 1987.

Microbiology

In this area the Major Regional Project in Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology is concerned with the training of specialists, the strengthening of microbial culture collections and the co-ordination of agricultural, medical, veterinary or animal-husbandry research.

Ten training courses have been organized on subjects such as the production of biofertilizers, the generation of bio-energy, the preservation of microbial culture collections and the monitoring of water quality. Twenty scholarships were granted to researchers to help them to continue their work in institutions in their countries participating in the International Network of Microbiological Resources Centres (MIRCENs). A conference on the Global Impact of Applied Microbiology was held in 1980 with the assistance of the Government of Nigeria. Five long-term research projects led to the establishment of the African Association for Biological Nitrogen Fixation (AABNF) under whose auspices three international conferences have been held in Africa since 1983.

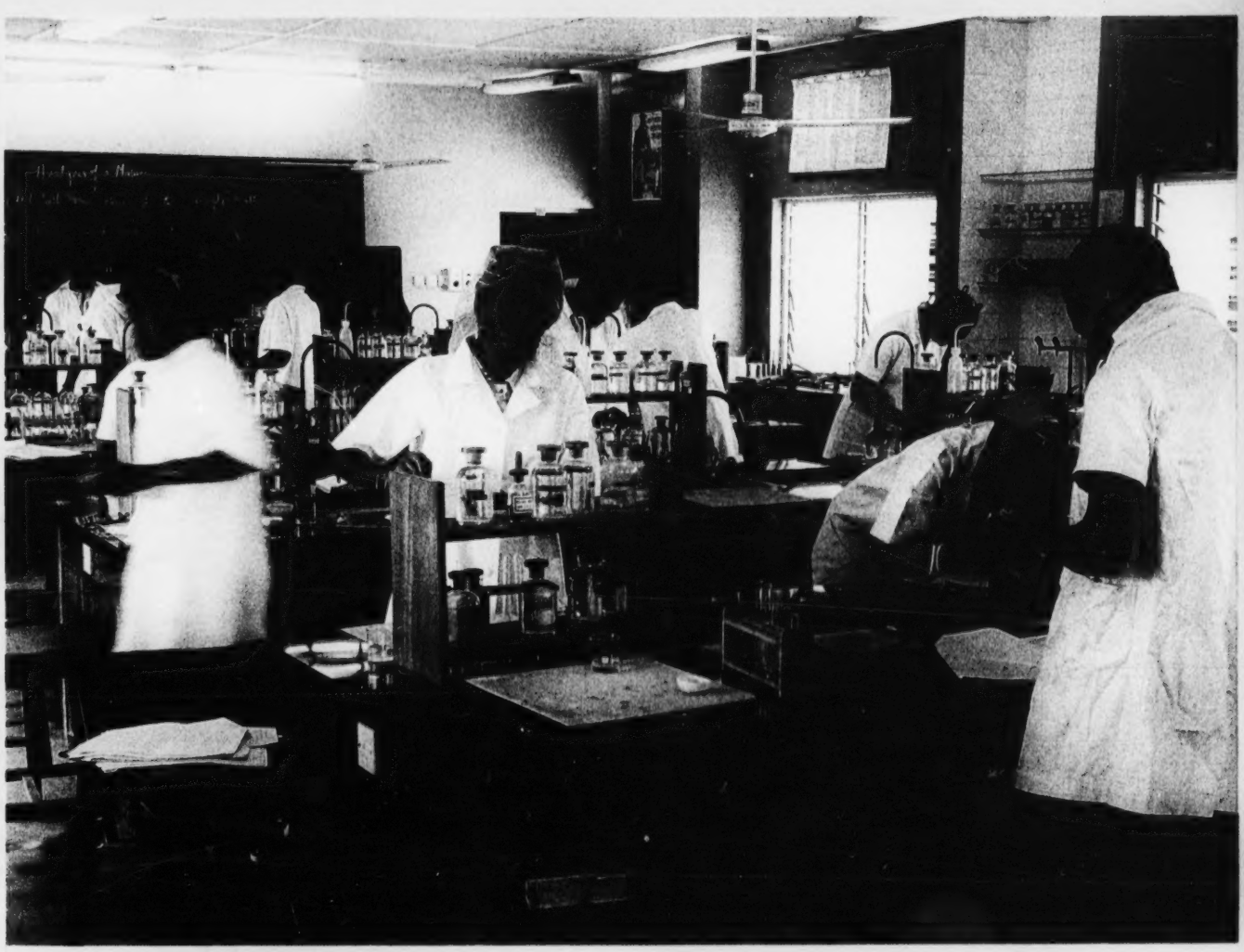
Thirty-three African countries take part in the African Biosciences Network (ABN), set up jointly by Unesco, the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and UNDP. Within this framework, African scientists are themselves able to identify the problems to be studied and organize the research and training activities intended to solve them.

Earth sciences

Fourteen combined training and research internships (lasting from three weeks to over three months), organized by Unesco and the relevant professional bodies, and a number of postgraduate courses have dealt with matters ranging from knowledge of the Precambrian and its mineral resources to mining geology or remote sensing. In all, 150 African geologists have been trained and steps have been taken to develop the flow and exchange of information between them and with European specialists; radiometric geological dating equipment has recently been supplied to this scientific community.

Water resources

Given the importance of water problems in Africa, special efforts have been made with regard to both the training of specialists at all levels (research and technicians) and assistance in research, notably under the International Hydrological Programme (IHP). The Major Regional Project on the Rational Utilization and Conservation of Water Resources, under which the Sahel is accorded priority, aims at improving the supply, use and conservation of water resources and the application of suitable technologies in rural areas. The fields covered by research include



Strengthening scientific capacity for development
(Photo : Unesco/Gary Fullerton)

the evaluation of traditional or new irrigation technology and that of small earth dams. Unesco is also participating in studies of the major river basins in Africa and has prepared a hydrological map of the continent.

The scope of Unesco's training effort is reflected by the fact that about fifty scholarships are granted each year to allow students to follow postgraduate courses or hydraulic engineering courses abroad, university departments or postgraduate courses dealing with water problems and hydrology receive support, and institutions or biennial courses are set up to train hydrological technicians.

In addition to advising Member States in the region wishing to establish research, information and education institutions, Unesco has contributed, with the financial support of UNDP, to setting up a hydraulic research station in the Sudan, the National Water Resources Institute in Nigeria and a com-

puterized information system on water resources in Mozambique. Assistance in the form of documents and equipment has been given to twelve libraries or national documentation centres.

Marine sciences

The backbone of training-and-research activities in this area is the regional network which, with the financial support of UNDP, implements the COMAR Project on coastal marine systems in Africa (COMARAF), a component of the Major Interregional Project on Research and Training leading to the Integrated Management of Coastal Systems (COMAR). Research carried out under this project focuses basically on coastal areas with a high population density. Estuaries, lagoons and coral reefs are among the most interesting, i.e. the most productive, ecosystems, but they are also the most exposed to pollution, coastal erosion and other damage resulting either from human activity or from natural causes. This work has been backed up by the strengthening or establishment of training-and-research facilities and institutions in Cameroon and Mozambique.

The importance that living and non-living marine resources have acquired and the need for the rational exploitation of the exclusive economic zones created by the new Law of the Sea have resulted in the formulation of a new project devoted to marine research and the exploitation of the oceans for the purpose of economic development.

Environmental sciences

Unesco has endeavoured to stimulate a scientific approach to integrated rural development and the conservation of renewable natural resources within the framework of several national or regional projects involving humid tropical zones or arid and semi-arid zones. In arid areas, efforts have concentrated on combating drought and desertification. Activities (seminars, workshops and pilot projects) carried out under these projects combine training and research and aim at developing and testing suitable methods for physical planning and the exploitation of natural resources, which contribute to maintaining the potential of the areas concerned in the medium and long term.

Action directly related to the conservation of nature and natural resources, genetic resources in particular, falls under the Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves and the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

Other activities focus on urbanization and the functioning of urban ecosystems. They contribute to solving the problems raised by the extremely rapid urbanization occurring in Africa.

A special effort has been made in these various areas to train specialists and retrain senior officials from the government departments concerned. In this context, reference should be made to the Project for Training and Integrated Pastoral Management (FAPIS), implemented in cooperation with the Institut du Sahel, and to the training courses for urban planners and managers.

Social and human sciences

Social sciences and development

In order to mobilize populations for development, they have to be known and understood and taught to know themselves. This is one of the main contributions of the social and human sciences, whose very vast field embraces all aspects of relations between peoples, groups and institutions, their interactions with the physical environment, and their experiences, traditions and aspirations.

If development is considered as an integrated, multifaceted process, it is vital to link economic analyses with those deriving from the other social sciences. The effect of economic, geographical or historical factors, for instance, is better understood with the help of psychological studies on social change. Moreover, this pluridisciplinary approach makes it possible both to undertake a general review or detailed analysis of the impact of various policies and programmes and to foresee the desired or undesired effects of the policies and programmes envisaged.

The social sciences in Africa

From the moment they attained their independence, African governments and universities understood the importance of social research in the development of their countries. Thus the main feature of the Lagos Plan of Action is the sociological approach to development, which African authorities intended to enhance. During the past two decades, the Africanization of research personnel in the social sciences has been intensified, and the instruments, concepts and methods used have been closely examined to ensure that they are suited to the specific problems raised by the economic, social and cultural development of the continent.

However, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa has shown that the application of 'conventional' social sciences has so far not contributed effectively to solving the region's development problems. Meagre financial resources and the isolation of researchers, which have scarcely contributed to the implementation of the recommendations of experts and African governments for the energetic promotion of the social sciences in Africa, explain this failure to some extent. Nevertheless, the social sciences should play their part in the development process by helping Africans to have a clearer view of the situation, to acquire relevant skills and to further the emergence of creativity directed towards progress.

Unesco's action

The basic lines of Unesco's action in the social and human sciences involve strengthening the relevant infrastructure and institutions in Africa, encouraging the flow of information through the dissemination of research findings, training personnel, promoting co-operation between researchers and institutions at the regional level, assisting in the struggle against apartheid and for human rights, furthering the participation of women and young people in development and advising on population matters.

Development of the social and human sciences

In 1974 Unesco established the Centre for the Co-ordination of Social Science Research and Documentation in Africa South of the Sahara (CERDAS) in order to boost regional co-operation between institutions. It directly contributed to setting up and strengthening subregional networks of training-and-research institutions (the Southern African Development Research Association (SADRA) and the Organization of Social Science Researchers in Eastern Africa (OSSREA)) and other regional or subregional professional associations.

Unesco has also helped to foster the teaching of international law and international relations, law, anthropology, political science and history at undergraduate and graduate level.

A meeting of experts on the teaching of philosophy in Africa was held in Nairobi in 1980.

The struggle against racism and apartheid

Since the creation of Unesco, programmes in this area have been given very special attention. Its

activities include studies and research, usually followed by publications, on the impact of apartheid in Unesco's spheres of competence, assistance to South African liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the preparation of a society without apartheid, and scholarships for the training of social scientists.

Contribution of young people to development

Seminars, study days and courses have helped to train young Africans for responsible tasks in youth organizations, to disseminate agricultural techniques and to encourage reflection on the role of young people in action for human rights and against apartheid and racism.

Established in 1978, Unesco's Special Fund for Youth has made it possible to finance a training seminar for key personnel, consultations, equipment missions and the publication of the *Journal of the ANC Youth* produced by the African National Congress (ANC), one of the South African independence movements recognized by OAU.

Population matters

Two regional advisers (based in Dakar and Nairobi) assisted the bodies responsible for national population and family planning programmes in their regions on matters concerning research, communication or the organization of community activities. Two seminars were organized, stressing the role of the media and of mass communication.

Safeguarding the non-physical cultural heritag
(Photo : Unesco/P. Almasy)

Culture

The failure of many economic development strategies implemented in Africa can be partly attributed to the fact that the cultural dimension of development has been neglected there for too long. The Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa (AFRICACULT, Accra, 1975) made a considerable contribution to developing this view and at the same time confirmed that cultural development is not merely the qualitative counterbalance to economic development, but the key to improving the quality of life, and that it confers a human dimension on development.

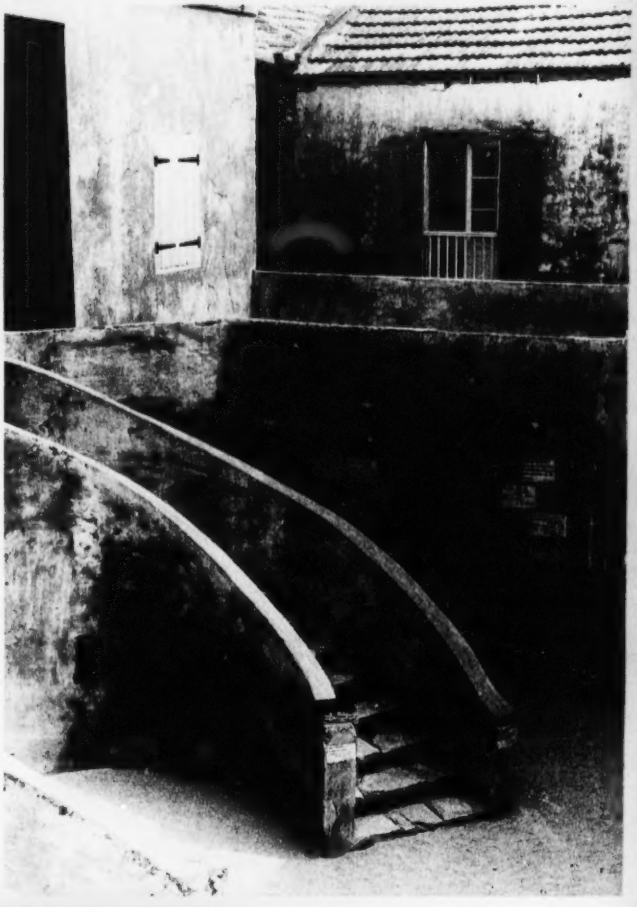
Theoretical considerations and the preparation of documents and agreements

Since that conference, Unesco has contributed to the gradual change in thinking on the cultural dimension of development which has taken place in Africa, as well as to the formulation of cultural agreements and the text of the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the Cultural Aspects in the Lagos Plan of Action, adopted by OAU at its twenty-first summit in 1985. In addition, Unesco has helped to make administrators aware of the cultural dimension of development and to train cultural development agents and cultural activities organizers either at the Regional Centre for Cultural Action in Lomé, Togo, or in regional or national seminars (ten of which were organized between 1985 and 1987).

Lastly, the Organization has provided support for local development pilot projects that include the cultural dimension. It has also advised States, at their request, on the formulation of cultural projects or policies.

Study and conservation of the African cultural heritage

The Ten-year Plan for the Study of African Oral Traditions and the Promotion of African Languages and the Horizon 2000 project to encourage the use of African languages have influenced both



Preservation of historical sites
(Photo : Unesco/A. Bailey)

Increasing public awareness of the value of the cultural heritage
(Photo : Unesco/Almasy-Vauthey)

the main lines of national, regional or subregional policies and the action of Unesco. Its activities include publications, contributions to the preparation of language atlases, dictionaries, glossaries and basic grammars, the gathering and study of oral and musical traditions, the study of educational materials and methods for teaching national languages and mother-tongues, not forgetting the preparation of terminologies, which should all contribute to promoting the use of African languages in all spheres of national life. It is worth mentioning one experiment in rural sound libraries carried out in Mali from 1982 to 1986: recording equipment provided to the inhabitants of rural areas made it possible to gather local, orally transmitted knowledge and know-how, have the young people listen to the recordings, explain the information and also let them hear recordings made about other cultures and about modern knowledge. Unesco also contributed to the establishment of three centres for the study of oral traditions and African languages, and of the African Cultural Institute in Dakar and the International Centre for Bantu Civilizations (with financial assistance from Sweden and UNDP).

Museologists and other specialists were granted scholarships for training in the conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage, both abroad and in centres such as those at Jos (Nigeria), Niamey (Niger) and Bagamoyo (United Republic of Tanzania), set up with the collaboration of UNDP. In addition, the Organization has distributed information on modern techniques for the conservation of the cultural heritage and contributed to the drafting of appropriate legislation.

The *General History of Africa* (being published) is the first thorough scientific study of African societies undertaken at the level of the continent as a whole and carried out by African historians and non-African researchers working together. At the same time, Unesco has encouraged the conservation and publication of privately owned Arab and Ajami manuscripts, with the assistance of the Islamic Call Society and the Saudi Arabian authorities.

African works are included in the oral literature series of the Unesco Collection of Representative Works. In addition, seven volumes of the 'Introduction to African Culture' series have been published.

International campaigns are under way for the preservation and protection of ancient cities (Mauritania) and Gorée Island (Senegal); others are being prepared in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The International Fund for the Promotion of Culture provided a total of $428,000 between 1979 and 1988 to forty projects executed in twenty-three African countries, contributing to the implementation of various cultural activities: theatre, dance, poetry, children's book production and the promotion of cultural activities.

Lastly, Unesco contributes to the protection or revival of artistic creation, crafts and traditional techniques and encourages the launching of cultural industries through its collaboration with the African Cultural Institute, the publication of papers on African crafts and the organisation of workshop sessions. It also helped to establish the Interstate Centre for the Promotion of Artistic Crafts and Cultural Tourism (Abomey, Benin).

Training sessions for traditional or modern artists or craftsmen and women have been organized. Unesco has also contributed to the establishment or reorganization of copyright institutions. Preparatory work for the establishment of cultural industries includes feasibility studies and an experts' meeting. A plan for the development of audio-visual policies has been drawn up in collaboration with African film-makers' associations.

Communication and information

Communication

Instrumental in organizing, educating and modernizing, the media have become the indispensable backstop for any economic, social or cultural development policy. This induced the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Africa (Yaoundé, July 1980) to define the specific tasks of the mass media in the region as participation, education, decentralization, use of national languages, and the strengthening of national unity and regional solidarity.

Unesco's action follows four major lines: study of the socio-cultural impact of the media and the planning of media development, the design of suitably adapted technologies, personnel training and the promotion of books and reading.

Since 1980 the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) has provided the bulk of the resources needed; in addition funds were provided either under the regular budget or from extra-budgetary sources.

In all, 125 projects amounting to a total of $13 million were financed by extra-budgetary resources. All were aimed at improving the training of key personnel and technicians and strengthening communication infrastructure, through the supply of equipment in particular.

The African rural press

In 1972 an initial experiment conducted in Mali demonstrated the potential of the rural or community press. The rural press has since expanded rapidly and met with considerable success. Originally designed as reading material for the newly literate, it has largely exceeded this goal; aside from its effective contribution to combating illiteracy, it has virtually everywhere become the leading, if not the only, source of reading matter in local languages for the general public.

In order to further this expansion, Unesco is encouraging the development of low-cost technologies, together with the study of manufacturing processes that make it possible to produce some equipment locally or to use solar energy. It also contributes to

Providing reading material for the newly literate
(Photo : Unesco/Eric Schwab)

The media as a tool for participating in development
(Photo : Unesco/Johannes Haile)

The rural press—a tool for training and information
(Photo : Unesco/Inez Forbes)

the training of creators and organizers able to produce high-quality messages, programmes and articles locally for the rural press and local radio stations.

Research and training

Studies have focused, among other things, on the socio-cultural impact of new technologies and the possibility of the joint production of reading material in national languages used by several countries as the vehicle for communication and education. Research or training seminars have covered themes such as the planning of communication and the influence of the media on the promotion of African women.

National or regional courses have been organized for broadcasters, journalists and audio-visual documentation archivists. Among those trained were staff members of the Pan African News Agency (PANA).

Book development

As a contribution to the plan of action, 'Towards a Reading Society—Objectives for the 1980s', Unesco assisted in studies focusing on obstacles to regular reading, or on book publication and distribution technologies; it contributed to the preparation of catalogues of authors and illustrators of children's books and to the choice of equipment suited to local conditions. It also contributed to encouraging the formulation of book-development policies and the building up of publishing, production and distribution infrastructures.

Established in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in 1977, the Regional Book Development Centre for Africa South of the Sahara (CREPLA) has striven to become a centre for collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and skills. It has contributed to the training of the specialists needed for all stages of book publishing and distribution.

Unesco has fostered the creation of regional or subregional committees for the publication of books for children and the newly literate in the most widely spoken languages, and has provided financial assistance for their production programmes.

Information

The General Information Programme (PGI) forms the backbone of Unesco's action in Africa relating to information. It aims at simplifying access to knowledge, improving the flow of data, and assisting Member States to build up their capabilities to exchange, store and use the information required for their development. Emphasis is laid on the production of standard-setting instruments for data processing, the application of new technologies and the strengthening of national, regional and international information services and systems and their interaction.

Under this programme an African Standing Conference on Bibliographic Control was set up in 1977 with the aim of introducing and ensuring the application in African countries of common bibliographic standards, identifying countries' needs and securing for them the experts required. The African States can also take advantage of general services such as those offered by the International Serials Data System (ISDS) or those concerning data format standardization and terminology.

Unesco was involved in the establishment of the Pan African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) by the Economic Commission for Africa and contributed to the setting up of subregional centres and networks. It also offers its collaboration to governments for the formulation and application of modern documentation and information policies, the creation of national documentation and information centres and national libraries and the organization of related training and research (especially the training of librarians and archivists). Thus between 1983 and 1988 the Organization administered thirteen projects, totalling $8.3 million geared for the establishment and development of information centres and services in Africa.

Developing co-operation between Africa and Unesco

Unesco is essentially the Specialized Agency of the United Nations whose field of competence embracing as it does education, science, technology and communication, makes it the adviser and indispensable support of African governments in their patient efforts to build up modern nations. Moreover, with its recognized capabilities in the spheres of culture and social sciences, Unesco, more than any other organization, is in a position to make a timely and decisive contribution to the analysis of the cultural and social factors that hinder the development of many States in the continent.

Unesco and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development

When at its Special Session on the United Nations General Assembly adopted the final version of its Programme of Action, Unesco's financial constraints and ensuing staff reductions in the Secretariat prevented the Organization from launching a new programme specifically designed on the basis of this Programme. The Organization nevertheless endeavoured to group together and strengthen those of its activities that fall within the scope of the Programme in order to respond as far as possible to the appeal made to the specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

Now that the Organization's third Medium-term Plan (1990–1995) and Programme and Budget for the coming biennium (1990–1991) are simultaneously under preparation, the Director-General intends to submit a range of activities coming within the framework of the Programme to the next session of the General Conference. These activities will be defined in accordance with the needs expressed by the African countries at the Special Session of the General Assembly, drawing on the documents prepared by African regional organizations and taking into consideration the comments and suggestions made by the African Member States during the consultations held regarding the preparation of Unesco's future activities. Eight areas have thus been identified as having a high priority, in which the Organization

could make a considerable contribution to solving the continent's problems. They are as follows:

1. The intensification and rationalization of school and out-of-school literacy teaching.
2. The use of new information and communication technologies for distance teaching (television, rural radio, etc.).
3. The introduction of informatics in African education.
4. Making people aware of the impact of human action on the biosphere (Man and the Biosphere programme—MAB): teaching of basic environmental care in schools, intensification of efforts to combat desertification, etc.
5. The development of human resources, in co-operation with the other United Nations institutions, organizations and programmes.
6. The better adaptation of higher education to development needs.
7. The systematic use of scientific and technological research and R&D to identify, define and solve the continent's problems.
8. The use of communication for development.

The adoption of Unesco's next Programme and Budget will thus enable the Organization to devote more and better focused resources to these priority programmes, while creating favourable conditions for an increase in the extra-budgetary resources provided by the financing institutions of the United Nations system, other regional or world aid organizations or funding bodies, or its Member States.

Direct assistance to African Member States

If its Member States so request, the Organization can use certain funds and resources—albeit limited—provided under its regular programme and budget in order to help them. It may also arrange for the outside funding sources with which it collaborates to contribute to the financing of projects that the African governments may request it to consider and which it would subsequently carry out.

It may also implement projects that the beneficiary governments finance with their own resources, but whose execution they may prefer to entrust to Unesco, availing themselves of its recognized competence.

Within the regular budget, the Participation Programme enables the Director-General to make a financial contribution to activities (seminars, meetings, research, training of specialists, even supply of equipement) which fall within the Organization's biennial Programme and help to implement it.

In addition, many activities include resources that enable Member States that so request to take advantage of Unesco's advice or expertise, especially concerning the formulation of their education, research, culture or communication policies and the feasibility of training, research or documentation institutions.

Unesco manages several funds, including:

The Intergovernmental Informatics Programme.

The International Fund for the Development of Physical Education and Sport.

The International Fund for the Promotion of Culture.

The Special Fund for Research and Experimental Development (R&D) in Africa.

The United Nations Emergency Relief Fund.

The Special Fund for Youth.

The Special Account for Increased Aid to Developing Countries.

The IPDC Special Account.

The Special Account for the Safeguarding of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The Special Fund of the World Campaign for Universal Literacy.

Through these it can meet requests for aid that comply with the funds' terms of reference.

Unesco's support may be requested directly from the Director-General. Otherwise the director of one of the Organization's regional offices may be addressed. These are: the Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA), the Regional Office for Science and Technology for Africa (ROSTA), or the Subregional Office for Education in Southern Africa. The Regional Advisers for Communication in Africa, the Regional Population Communication Advisers, the Regional Adviser for Culture in Africa; the Unesco Representatives for Sahelian Affairs and to Central Africa, to Southern Africa and in Cameroon are also able to provide information, within their fields of competence, on ways and means of obtaining the support of Unesco.

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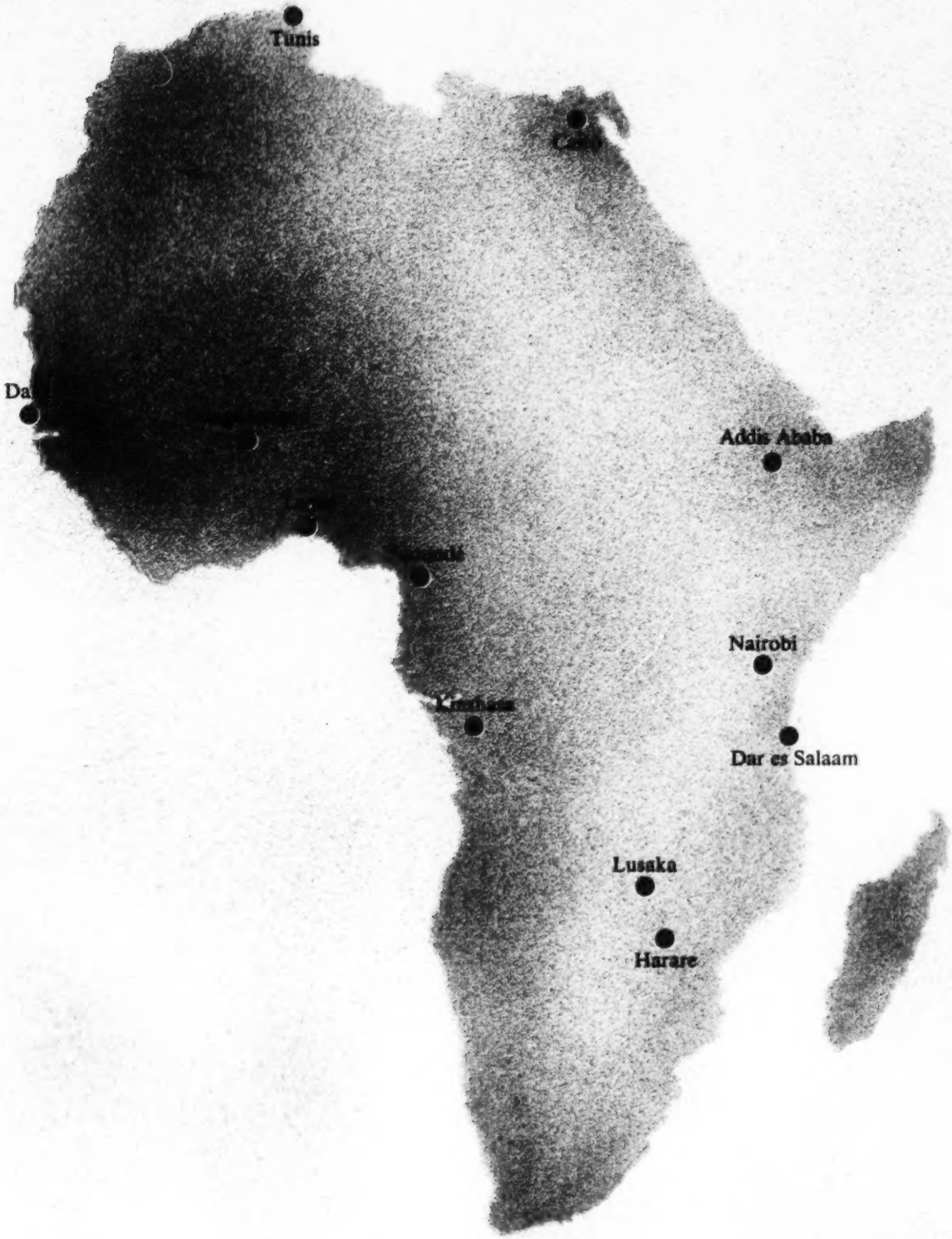
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